

NO PHOTO    **Underhill, Thomas Harry**

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Thomas Underhill was born in Porterville California on March 23, 1924, the seventh child of Thomas Wesley Underhill and Maria Helena Underhill. Thomas was preceded in death by his sisters, Charlotte, Alice, Edith and Norma, and his two brothers, Samuel and William.

By all accounts told to family members, growing up in Porterville in the late 20's and 30's was a "Tom Sawyer-esk" experience. His two older brothers took him hunting and fishing throughout the Tulare County foothills, while his older sisters took care of their little brother around the house.

In the late 30's, the winds of war were stirring in Europe and Tom paid close attention to the unfolding events. Akin to many youths living in the backwaters of America, he felt the call of his ailing nation after December 7, 1941, and therefore enlisted in the United States Army soon after his 18th birthday. He deployed from Oakland, California and upon passing underneath the Golden Gate Bridge, all his comrades with the 96th Infantry Division tossed pennies overboard for good fortune as they ventured westward to parts unknown. For Tom, those "parts unknown" included several of the bloodiest battles of the South Pacific. Peleliu, Saipan, Leyte and the worst of all...Okinawa, landing with the first wave on April 1, 1945, Easter Sunday. Tom was the recipient of two individual Bronze Star metals, the nation's fourth highest award for military combat bravery.

Post-War, Tom attended the University of San Francisco where obtained a bachelor's degree in Political Science and then completed law school. He passed the Bar exam in 1952; practicing law in Bakersfield for over 50 years. A country lawyer, he was an advocate for the little man.

Tom was preceded in death by his wife, Alice. Tom and Alice are survived by their three children, Thomas Brent Underhill (Marjorie), Scott Arthur Underhill (Jane) and Allison Underhill Main (Tom); five grandchildren, Erica Underhill Klassen (Jim), Ryan Underhill, Hannah Underhill, Christopher Underhill (Tavia), Andrew Main and two great grandchildren, Jack Thomas Klassen and Cooper James Klassen.

A life well lived and a great American Patriot.